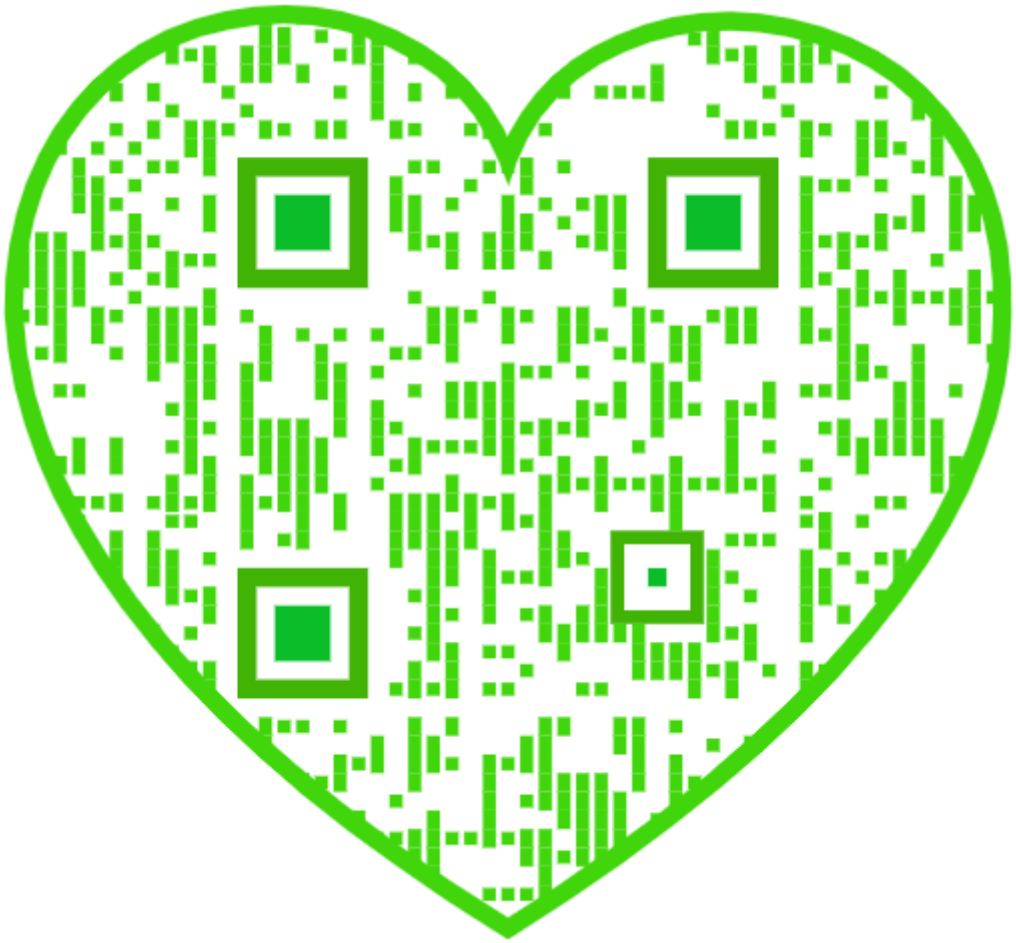
3511
76 C5
912
opy 1

A Christmas Reverie



A Christmas Reverie

The Spirit of the Christ, I come to you
At dawn of day. Tis Christmas, and a new
Era I bring on the wings of Heaven.

Albert R. Fiske

Wagoner Printing Company, Galesburg, Ill.

Copyrighted, 1912, by Albert R. Fiske

A Christmas Reverie

Pile on the logs and let the fire burn,
And crackle gleefully, the whole world spurn,
Alone I'll spend my Christmas Eve!
What care I for the winds that blow,
The storm without, the cold and snow,
Have I not comfort? You'd almost believe!
Why, all the world my gold will buy,
Her treasures at my feet now lie,
For Money, Power, these are mine.
I own a fact-ry, men employ,
And all earth's pleasures can enjoy,
And quaff life's reddest, richest wine.
I'll light my pipe as I sit here,
And smoke, and catch the season's cheer,
And watch the logs and burning embers
That snap and crackle, seem to say,
"Alone we'll be till dawn of day,
Tonight, the bleakest of December's!
Let winds their hardest blow and drift the path.
Real comfort yours, for all worth having hath
The world giv'n you, is your tonight!"
Ah, yes! I know its worth, 'tis mine,
A mansion, reputation fine.—
"A man of wealth," they say, "with might."

This fire, the burning log and ember,
They make one think! I can remember
Those days of youth, those days of toil,
When mother died, and Fortune cast her boy
Out in the world to win or lose, employ
His wits in games that make or spoil.
What days those were! when only strife
And constant struggle made up life,
And all was hard, although with health!
My friends gave me a little sum
With which to start and to become
What now I am, a man of wealth.
A little sum, a hundred t'was, I think.—
With this Succeed! or Fail! or Sink!
And God, but what a bitter fight!
Yet win I must! I set my face
Like Stone, and—I won my place,
Nor thought of what is just or right.
Ah, well, there is no room in marts of trade,
In modern business where gold is made,
For Sentiment and that sort of thing.
A fight it is, a fight in which the strong
Are those who win! the spoils belong
To him, the "fittest," in the business ring.

But look! I see in the fire's red glow,—
Or is it fancy?—it may be so—

You know 'tis Christmas, one might dream;
I see—yes—see a woman's face!
'Tis young—'tis old—of truest grace,
'Tis mother!—no, a girl t'would seem!
I see her hair—golden—her eyes
Are blue. Ah, how one's mem'ry flies
To days that long are gone and fled!
I wonder where the girl may be,
And if she thinks of one—of me—
The girl I loved!—or is she dead?
A bachelor! this my lot in life,
To live without a thought of wife!
Then why should I this vision see?
I'll tend the fire, another piece
Of wood I'll fetch, this dreaming cease
And be content with Fate's decree.
I'll light my pipe again, and trace
Through curling smoke the welcome face
Of Fortune as she comes to bring
More wealth and gold to me! Ah, Love, 'tis well!
But in the mart it cannot buy or sell,
And there 'tis worth not anything.

I know they say that Love doth reign,
Is Queen, and rules o'er heart and brain,
Is man's unfailing, guiding Star.
But Love buys not factories, pow'r or place,

Nor gives a man advantage in the race,
Nor saves him from the battle's scar.
I might have married, might have lived
A better life, myself deprived
Of independence and what's dear
To him, a bus'ness man, whose mind
Is taken up with it, the grind
Of business and a career.
The years I've lived have taught me this,
The idlest folly Sentiment is!
Religion, Poetry as well.
It's all a struggle and a strife,
The brute fighting the brute, is Life,—
One constant, seething, burning Hell!
Ah, give to me the bloody sand!
The arena! and there I'll stand
And fight e'en like a Roman slave,
Till ev'ry bit of blood is gone,
And sword has pierced me, and I'm done!
Then, let them lay me in my grave!

But hark! I hear the distant bell.
'Tis Midnight! Christmas! All is well!
The music sounds so strange and sweet!
What pow'r it hath to touch, inspire
The slumb'ring soul!—now low, now higher
It falls, rises, in measured beat.

The deathly silence of the night;
The spectre shadows; flick'ring light
Of burning log and smould'ring ember.
Oh, this is solitude! the room
Is dark and heavy now with gloom,
The heavy gloom of December.

istant voices, singing.

The Christ is born today
In manger far away,
In Bethlehem, so still and sleeping.
The shepherds from afar
Are led by beck'ning star
Where Angels tender watch are keeping.
For here is born the one
To whom the world will come
With all its grief and sin, appealing
To his great heart of love
Forgiveness from above,
The Christ to whom the world is kneeling.

d again.

The bells! the bells! the Christmas bells!
They ring across the snow,
Their notes proclaim, their music tells

The birth of Love, the death of Woe.
The birth of Love, in Mary's son,
The Christ we see, adore today.
The death of Woe, in heart that's won
From sin and grief, to the better way.
The bells! the bells! the Christmas bells!
They ring across the snow * * *

Is this a dream, that I can hear
The song of angels? the words are clear
And sound of Heaven rather than of earth!
And I've been one of faithless heart!
My doubts did force me to depart
In youth from trust and faith in Jesus' birth.
Belief in Heaven, this I've said
Belongs to ages past, the dead,
And not to modern man or time!
And now shall I believe my ear
When it will tell me that I hear
Angelic music, Heaven's rhyme?
I know not, yet it may be true
That God doth live and loveth you,
And really sent the Christ to men!
It may be true!—But what is this?—
A form!—He stands before me!—is
It but a vision, a dream again?
* * * What dost thou seek?

Speak! I say, Speak!

My Friend, I come to you tonight
Borne hither by the wings of light,
From lands afar and across the snow.
My name is Fortune! and I bring
The gift of which the angels sing,
Christ's Love, which Life it is to know.
You think you have of Fortune's cup drunk deep.
That I, your Friend, have 'nabled you to reap
A rich harvest of Life's best things.
You say you are a man of wealth,
With gold a-plenty, all that stealth
And will can gain, or labor brings;
A man who owns estates, commands
The fear of all, a thousand hands
That toil in fact'ry's noise and grind.
A Captain of Industry, this you claim
Is title you have earned, the name
You hear when banqueted and dined.
But, oh, my Friend, don't think that I
Have giv'n you this!—Tell me why
Mere wealth a blessing you should deem.
It will not buy you love or joy,
But often heart and soul destroy,
And make of life an idle dream.
Though poor, there's still a greater curse

That might befall a soul! still worse
To be enslaved by lust for gold.
The dollar's an elusive thing,
For any time it might take wing
And leave a man, before he's old.
It will not buy a home with wife
And children, these which make of life
A thing so holy, pure and sweet!
The love of woman! this is worth
Far more than other things of earth,
Divine, it maketh life complete!
I wonder why you call these times
Christian, with all their social crimes
And evil, selfishness and hate.
Would Christ if he should come today,
Would he condone it as the way
That men should live in the modern State?
The dark tenements of the poor!
Of these you're proud, I'm sure,
Where dwell the men who toil for you.
Oh, how can you enjoy your wealth
When you are guilty of stealing health
And happiness! for this you do.
I see the fact'ry's stifling smoke
That tells of toil.—But I invoke
God's mercy on those who dare to make
Of man, for lust of gold, a slave

To work and know untimely grave!
Injustice please, for Industry's sake!
I see the mine where men were caught
Like rats, and struggled there and fought
Only to die in smoke and gas.
I hear the cry of women left,
Of mothers, children, wives, bereft,—
A tale of modern life, alas!
* * * I come to you tonight
Borne hither by the wings of light
From lands afar and across the snow.
My name is Fortune! and I bring
The gift of which the angels sing,
Christ's Love, which Life it is to know.

vision fades. Distant voices, singing.

'Tis Christmas morn! tis Christmas morn!
In Bethlehem the Christ is born,
The world is bathed in holy light!
The day will dawn! the day will dawn!
And lust and hatred, these be gone,
And vanished too, earth's fev'rish night.
The bells they tell, the bells they tell
Of better times! let music swell!
For Christ hath come to melt man's heart,
And he doth bring from realms above

The gift, the magic pow'r of Love
To claim the world, bid Greed, depart!

How strange this is, that I should hear
This heav'nly music, and not fear,
In converse with a phantom form!
Could it be true that this log fire,
The smould'ring embers, might inspire
Such fancies, or the raging storm?
But look!—shall I believe my sight?—
It must be I've gone mad tonight!—
But there it is! a woman fair!
In flowing garments now she stands
Before me, reaches out her hands,
And breathes a whisper in the air.
Her face is wonderful, her eyes
The color of the summer skies,
So very deep they are and blue.
Her hair is light and wavy, gold,
And falls so careless down, while cold
Grey shadows give it diff'rent hue.
She's young, and something makes her seem
A heav'nly vision, a poet's dream.
I fain would greet her, but I fear
My words would break the spell
And frighten her, compel
Her going e'er her voice I hear.

The Spirit of the Christ am I!
I'm ever young, shall never die,
And never shall my mission cease.
Vigil I kept o'er manger bed,
When Jesus came, of whom 'tis said,
He heralded the day of Peace!
With shepherds I beheld afar
The shining of that wondrous star
That led the way to Mary's child.
I welcomed the first Christmas morn
When Jesus, Son of God, was born,
The babe so pure and undefiled!
And all his life, tho' quite unseen,
I dwelt with him, his angel, e'en
When enemies plotted the Cross.
In dark Gethsemene I stood
With him alone, and then fain would
Have saved his life, the world its loss.
And now I come to you tonight
And linger in this flick'ring light
To woo your heart and gain your love,
That you may see my face divine,
And catch that Spirit which is mine
Of Christ that cometh from above.
A Prophet of the better age,
Foretold by poet, seer and sage,

I come at the Christmas season.
I bring the world its greatest good,
The Love of Christ and Brotherhood!
I see them wedded with Reason!
The day of Peace! the day of Peace!
When war among the clans shall cease,
And all the world shall know the Way!
When men no longer will complain
Of hate and greed, for Christ shall reign!
Tis coming! coming! the better day.

Distant voices, singing.

Hands clasping hands and hands across the sea,
We're getting together, the Greek, the Slav, the Free.
Men of all races and men of all clans,
One interest is ours and that is Man's!
This is our hope and the thing we await,
The coming of Peace and the passing of hate.
Flesh of one flesh and blood of one blood,
The nations all in a Brotherhood!

The Spirit of the Christ, I come to you
At dawn of day. Tis Christmas, and a new
Era I bring on wings of Heav'n.
Co-operation, this the homely word

In bus'ness, commerce, and religion heard,
For Love new-born to man is giv'n.
No more of poverty and cruel greed!
From bonds of selfishness the world is freed,
And Christ is ent'ring ev'ry heart!
Go forth and live this Love in marts of trade,
And make your life worth while, nor be afraid
Success or Fortune will depart!
My Spirit will abide with you
And whisper Love that you may do
The loving act, the Christlike deed.
May Christmas mean to you this year
A larger life, a new career,
Acceptance of a nobler creed!
But I must go e'er morning sun
Has risen, e'er the night is done,—
I cannot longer stay.
A potent influence am I,
But seldom seen by mortal eye,—
Adieu,—I'm away!

vision fades.

A vision this, just a vision!
A dream, a marvelous illusion!
And yet I somehow must believe!

The logs are smouldering, the fire is low;
'Tis light, and I can see the falling snow.
The Spirit of the Christ, oh, leave
With me today your mystic spell,
That I may know and learn it well,
The lesson thus divinely taught!
A vision, trance, it may have been,
But this it's done—revealed my sin,
And to my soul the light has brought!

DEC 23 1912

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 015 907 276 9